







A

C H A R G E
DELIVERED TO THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF OXFORD

BY

RICHARD BAGOT, D.D.,
BISHOP OF OXFORD,

AND CHANCELLOR OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER:

AT HIS
FOURTH VISITATION,
MAY, 1842.

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TO
THE REVEREND THE CLERGY
OF
THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD,
THIS CHARGE
MADE PUBLIC IN COMPLIANCE WITH THEIR REQUEST,
IS
AFFECTIONATELY AND RESPECTFULLY
INSCRIBED
BY
THEIR FAITHFUL BROTHER AND SERVANT,
R. OXFORD.

Cuddesden Palace,
May, 1812.

2008
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

A CHARGE,

&c. &c.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE serious inconvenience and embarrassment, to which, at my last Visitation, I was exposed in consequence of the unsettled state of the Berkshire jurisdiction, induced me a year ago to postpone the business in which we are now engaged to the present time, in the hope that during the interval these not unimportant matters, which have now for several years been waiting a decision, would have been adjusted.

In this hope I have been disappointed. Berkshire therefore must remain unvisited, until such time as those obstacles which impede the due exercise of the Bishop's authority shall be removed, and the new arrangements shall be definitively ordered and completed; and I feel sure, that the Clergy in Berkshire

will not misconstrue this determination into any mark of inattention, or want of interest, respect, or regard towards them on my part.

I cannot, however, allow these circumstances to preclude me any longer from calling together the Clergy of that part of my Diocese, to which the remarks I have just made do not apply ; and you must yourselves feel, as I have long since felt, that of all Dioceses, that of Oxford is perhaps the one which, at the present time, can least bear any interruption of intercourse between the Bishop and his Clergy.

Since I last addressed you collectively from this chair, four years have elapsed, and, although it commonly happens, that men are disposed to exaggerate the importance of events occurring in their own time, and in which they are themselves more or less the actors,—still I cannot but think, that those four years will be hereafter looked upon as the commencement of one of the most eventful epochs in the history of the English Catholic Church.

Would to God, that he, who has been called to preside over you at so momentous a period, had been an abler and a better man,—one more fitted by learning, clear-sightedness, and experience, to cope with the emergencies of the times, and to guide you far

better than I can hope to do, amid the daily increasing difficulties of our position !

My trust, however, is in that strength, which is made perfect in weakness,—my comfort in the assurance of your prayers.

But to proceed. The last four years have witnessed the rapid development of those principles, which the world (though untruly, for they are of no locality) has identified with Oxford, and to which I felt it my duty to advert at my last Visitation. Those principles have, during this short interval, spread and taken root,—not merely in our own neighbourhood, and in other parts of England, but have passed from shore to shore,—east and west,—north and south,—wherever members of our Church are to be found,—nay, are unquestionably the object to which, whether at home or abroad, the eyes of all are turned who have any interest or care for the concerns of religion. I am not now saying any thing about the tendency of those principles : I am simply asserting the fact of their existence and development. There they are, whether for good or evil ; and they are forming at this moment the most remarkable movement, which, for three centuries at least, has taken place amongst us.

And now, in the next place, I would advert to the manner of their growth. Certainly they have been fostered with no friendly hand. No adscititious aid of powerful patronage has helped them forward,—no gale of popular applause has urged them on. On the contrary, they seem to have been the single exception, which an age of latitudinarian liberality could discover, against the rule of tolerating any form of belief. And, while many, whose motives are above all suspicion, and whose honoured names need no praise of mine, have unhesitatingly and utterly condemned them,—while many more have looked on with caution and mistrust,—while many in authority (myself among the number) have felt it their duty to warn those committed to their trust of the possible tendencies of the doctrines in question,—they have likewise been exposed to a storm of abuse as violent as it has been unceasing,—to calumnies and misrepresentations of the most wanton and cruel description, and to attacks from the Dissenting, Democratic, and Infidel portions of the public press, clothed in language which I will not trust myself to characterize, but which, for the sake of our common humanity, (I say nothing of Christian charity,) it behoves us, as with one voice, to reprobate and condemn. I

am not now saying, whether these principles deserved the chilling reception they have met with,—I am only stating an admitted fact, that such has been their reception.

Again, let us look at the character of the doctrines brought before the public. What has been their attraction? What have they to recommend them to general adoption? The system in question, instead of being an easy comfortable form of religion, adapting itself to modern habits and luxurious tastes, is uncompromisingly stern and severe,—laying the greatest stress upon self-discipline and self-denial,—encouraging fasting, and alms-deeds, and prayer, to an extent of which the present generation, at least, knows nothing,—and inculcating a deference to authority which is wholly opposed to the spirit of the age,—and uniformly upholding that minute attention to external religion, which our formularies, indeed, prescribe, but which the world has mostly cast aside as superfluous, or as shackling and interfering with the freedom which it loves.

Now, such being the character of the religious movement which has forced itself upon our notice, it must be obvious to every one, who thinks at all on the subject, that it has peculiarities about it,

which render it quite unlike any thing which has hitherto been observed among us ;—and, if this be the case, it is no less obvious, that a system, which has grown up under such disadvantages, and which professes, at least, to be that of the ancient Catholic Church, deserves at any rate to be treated with as much of prudence and circumspection, as Gamaliel prescribed in a not very dissimilar instance ^a.

But this is a sort of forbearance, of which I have seen no signs whatsoever. I do not mean,—God forbid!—that, if the doctrines of which I am speaking are erroneous, they are not to be exposed and condemned, that high and low, rich and poor, are not in their several stations to be warned against adopting them ; but what I say is this, that error is to be met with argument, not with clamour, and to be answered with painful care, and grave reverence, and firm (though kind) remonstrance ;—not to be made the subject of rancorous declamation,—not to be treated with the rude, coarse abuse, which party spirit is sure to elicit from ill-conditioned minds, and which is as opposite to the tone of Christian condemnation as darkness is to light. Persecution never has, never will, answer its object ;—there is

^a Acts v. 35—39.

something in the very constitution of our common nature, which inclines men to side with those whom they think unfairly treated. And such, I am disposed to think, has been the case with respect to the opinions of which I am speaking. Whether those opinions are right or wrong, I verily believe, that the temper in which their advocates have been attacked has gained them more adherents than, perhaps, any other cause.

What can have been more lamentable than the tone, which (of course I am speaking generally) has been adopted by those who have set themselves (I hope conscientiously) to oppose the opinions in question,—what can be more offensive to Christian charity, than to hear men of blameless lives held up to public execration in the newspapers of the day, as “a synagogue of Satan,” and branded as “heretics” by persons, who yet hold back the grounds on which they make their charges ? Above all,—and I cannot notice without grave reprehension the conduct of these individuals,—what can be more offensive than to see Clergymen, Ministers of the Gospel of Peace, so far forgetting themselves, their duties, and their position, as to appear at public meetings as speakers, or in the daily journals as correspondents, whose

tone is rather that of personal opposition, than of grave objection to error, and who thereby almost compel us to think, that they are lamentably deficient in that spirit which is “pure, and peaceable, and gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits,”—“thinking no evil,”—“rejoicing not in iniquity, but rejoicing in the truth.”

I would that such could see themselves as they appear to others,—and could think of themselves, as all good men, of whatever party, must think of them. I would that they would reflect, with whom they are leaguing themselves, and whether some of those with whom they act are not men whose hearts’ desire, and ulterior object, is the total destruction of our National Church. And more than this,—I would that they should learn a lesson from the men, whose doctrines they repudiate, and whose persons they so bitterly assail. Whatever may have been the errors, whether of doctrine or of judgment, (and of these I am not at present speaking,) of which the Authors of the Tracts for the Times have been guilty, I will say this for them, that the moderation and forbearance they have shewn under insults the most galling and provoking that can be imagined, has been exemplary; and I am glad to avail myself

of this public opportunity of expressing my admiration of the meek and Christian spirit they have invariably shewn,—not rendering railing for railing, and never tempted, by the frequent ignorance, and often immeasurable inferiority, of many of their adversaries, to retort upon them.

You will observe, that what I have now said has no reference whatever to the question, how far the doctrines promulgated by the Tract-writers are, or are not, erroneous: but I am desirous now to record my judgment, that, granting them to be ever so erroneous, ever so heretical, and ever so much to be condemned, they have been dealt with, for the most part, in that spirit of predetermined hostility, which is most apt to confound what is true with what is false, and which, from having so little of Christian charity in it (for charity, while it has no leaning to the error, is lenient to the erring), is on that very ground to be suspected.

I now proceed, in the discharge of the heavy responsibilities of my office, to offer some remarks and advice on the subject of the opinions of which we have been speaking.

Four years ago, when the principles in question were beginning to spread, men knew not how, and

while there was more doubt than at present whereunto they would grow,—whether, like fire among the thorns they would blaze up for the moment, and then die away,—or whether the flame was kindled among such materials as would give forth no mean light, and not be readily extinguished, I took the opportunity to speak freely to you, of the good, which, in my opinion, had actually resulted from the publication of the Tracts for the Times, of the tendencies in them which I considered dangerous; and I further stated to you, that my fears arose, for the most part, rather from the disciples than the teachers.

During the period which has intervened, I have, speaking generally, seen no reason to alter my sentiments.

The Tracts for the Times have indeed been brought to a close, and at my personal request. And I take this opportunity of repeating in public, what I have never been backward to acknowledge in private, my deep sense of the dutifulness, and ready submission, which was then shewn to the Bishop of the diocese, and of the affection and kind feeling displayed towards myself personally by the individuals most interested.

With respect to the 90th Tract, which was the immediate cause of my interference, I have already expressed my opinion, that it was objectionable, and likely to disturb the peace of the Church. I thought so last year, and I think so still. I deeply regret its publication, though I am quite ready to allow, that the explanations, with which it has been subsequently modified, or rather, I should say, by which the writer's original meaning has been made more clear, have in part relieved me from some of those most serious apprehensions, with which the first perusal of it filled my mind. I am aware, that the Articles of our Church were rather drawn up with the view of including, than of excluding, men of various shades of opinion, and I am further aware, that, if a precedent were wanted for—I will not say stretching—but for contorting the meaning of those formularies, nothing can exceed the licence which has been assumed by Calvinistic interpreters of the Articles—a licence, which has often gone beyond what was attempted in the 90th Tract. Still, I cannot persuade myself, that any but the plain obvious meaning is the meaning which as members of the Church we are bound to receive ; and I cannot reconcile myself to a system of interpretation, which

is so subtle, that by it the Articles may be made to mean anything or nothing.

Nevertheless, if within certain limits the Articles may be so construed as not to force persons of a Calvinistic bias to leave the Church, I do not see why a similar licence, within the same limits, is not to be conceded to those, whose opinions accord with those of our Divines who resisted the puritanical temper of the 16th and 17th centuries ; or why such persons should be forced into communion with Rome. And I say this the more, because I am satisfied that the 90th Tract was written with the object of retaining persons within the bosom of our Church who might otherwise ^b have seceded, and further, because I think that few living men have written more ably upon the errors of the Romish Church, and the sin of leaving our own Church for her communion, than the author of that Tract.

With respect to the other numbers of the work in question, it is obviously impossible to speak otherwise than very generally. No doubt there are many imperfections in them. The language is often painfully obscure, equivocal, capable of bearing

^b See pages 28, 29 of Mr. Newman's letter to Dr. Jelf; also the introduction of Dr. Pusey's letter to Dr. Jelf.

several interpretations, and not rarely it is most unguarded. And all this, in addition to there being many statements in them, on which good men will hold conflicting opinions to the end of time. I feel also bound to say, that the authors of the Tracts have seemed to me far too indifferent to the discord and distractions which their actions and writings have caused, thereby hurrying on a crisis, from the acceleration of which nothing is to be hoped, and everything to be feared. However, as public attention has been, and is so strongly directed to the Tracts, there seems no fear lest any errors in them should remain undetected. God grant, that what there is of evil in them may be rendered innocuous, that what is good may be yet further blessed to the Church's welfare ; and that those, who contributed to produce them, may in all their future writings so profit by past experience, as to keep ever before them the Apostolic injunctions—“not to let their good be evil spoken of,” and “to abstain from all appearance of evil.”

That, in spite of these faults, the Tracts for the Times have, from their commencement, exerted a beneficial influence among us in many respects must, I should think,—even their enemies being

their judges,—be admitted. Their effect even upon those who are not in communion with our Church,—the Dissenters and Romanists,—has not been immaterial; and within the Church it is impossible to mark the revival of Church principles which has taken place among us, the increasing desire for unity—the increasing sense of the guilt and evils of schism—the yearning after that discipline which we have so much lost—the more ready and willing obedience to ecclesiastical authority—the greater anxiety to live by the Prayer-Book—the better observation of the Fasts and Festivals of the Church—the more decent ministration of, and deeper reverence for, her Sacraments—growing habits of devotion and self-sacrifice,—it is impossible, I say, to see these things, and their growth within the last ten years, and not acknowledge that, under God, the authors of the Tracts have been the humble instruments of at least bringing them before men's minds, and of exhibiting in their own lives their practical fruits.

And now, since nothing can be more unfair, than to make the teachers responsible for the proceedings of the disciples, where the latter are now wholly beyond their control, I would say a few words

with respect to those, who, as you know, excited my fears heretofore, and have since in some instances verified them. I am happy to say that, so far as the Parochial Clergy are concerned, the caution which I felt it my duty to give at my last Visitation with respect to the revival of obsolete practices, which were calculated to give offence, without any adequate advantage resulting, has been, so far as I have been able to ascertain, attended to. Of course questions about vestments and matters of a similar description, cannot be raised without much higher principles being involved. It was not a contest whether the red rose or the white were the fairer flower, which in a former age deluged our land with blood. These were but the outward badges of the strife of political opinions within. Still, in the present state of the Church, when there are already such miserable divisions among us with respect to the essentials of Religion, it does seem to me worse than folly in those who so far allow their zeal to master their judgment, as to go out of their way to create fresh causes of dissension, by giving undue importance to things indifferent, and even of questionable value. And besides, those, who profess to be guided by Catholic principles,

should remember that one of the first principles of Catholicism is “*ἄνευ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μηδὲν πράσσειν*^c,” to do nothing without Episcopal sanction.

Generally speaking, indiscretions such as I have alluded to emanate only from very young men ; and such persons may be quite sure that, whatever be their talents, or how sincere soever their zeal, there cannot but be great defects of character in them—they can hardly be otherwise than self-confident, or vain, or deficient in humility, or far from having disciplined minds. And here I must further observe, that there has appeared to me a lamentable want of judgment, and I cannot but say of charity and humility too, in the writings of some who of late have come forward as the advocates of Catholic principles. When a man anathematizes Protestantism, he may very possibly mean nothing more than that he refers Dissenters to the judgment of God,—no doubt it was so in the case to which I allude,—but not one man in a thousand will understand this ; to the world, who receive words in their common acceptation, he will seem to be invoking judgments on whatever is not Popish. And I do say, that men ought to pause and consider

^c Ignatius ad Trall. § 2.

what they are about, before they use language which is sure to be misinterpreted. Really the recklessness to the mischiefs, which arise from expressions of this description, is quite inexcusable.

Further I must take leave to tell those persons, whoever they are, that they are doing no good service to the Church of England, by their recent publication of manuals of private devotion, extracted from the Breviary and similar sources—by inserting therein no small portion of highly objectionable matter, and tacitly, if not openly, encouraging young persons to be dissatisfied with what God has given them, and to look on the contents of our admirable Liturgy as insufficient to meet the wants of a Catholic mind. Be it ours, my Reverend Brethren, to remind the young and ardent of these days, that it is a most dangerous delusion to wander from any thing so definite and tangible as the Prayer-Book, in search of what is so indefinite and elusive as that shadowy Catholicism, which, under the aspect represented by them, has never existed except in their own imaginations.

Again, I most strongly deprecate the tone which some, mistaking their position and their duties, have thought fit to adopt with respect to the

Reformation and the Reformers. No doubt that in some, and these not unimportant respects, as in the loss of Church discipline, we suffered by that great convulsion. There was much fearful crime, much iniquitous sacrilege, much done that had been better left undone. So likewise the Reformers were but frail, fallible men, compassed about with many infirmities, sometimes halting (how could it be otherwise?) between two opinions, and sometimes of course erring in judgment. Still we are their debtors to an incalculable amount: and if, perhaps, we have lost some little through them, or rather in spite of their wishes to the contrary, we have lost far less than our sins deserved: we have even now, through their instrumentality, more blessings within our reach than we care to avail ourselves of; and if, I must say it once more, if we were not deficient in humility, we should be so grateful for what we have, that we might almost, perhaps, begin to hope, that in His good time God would make up to us, what hitherto we have been without.

Further ;—the rude, unthinking, and unjustifiable manner, in which some have allowed themselves to speak of the Reformation, has a direct tendency to produce that frame of mind which under-estimates

the intolerable evils and errors of the Romish system,—which slurs over its defects, conceals its guilt, and thereby inclines the doubting, the thoughtless, the self-willed, the half-educated, to listen to the suggestions of those who offer them, in communion with the Roman obedience, the unity which they long for, and the support of a guide who claims to be infallible. And let no one think, that this is an imaginary evil, or that there is no danger at the present time of a secession from our ranks to those of Rome. There is very great danger, very imminent danger, one that it behoves us to look steadily in the face, and be prepared for. I do not mean that I anticipate any defection, my Reverend Brethren, from those of our own profession : I trust and believe, that the Clergy generally are too fully persuaded in their own minds that the Church in which they exercise their Ministry has all the marks of a branch of the true Church, to make them have a thought or a wish beyond it. And I see nothing in a few sad cases which have occurred of late, to make me change my opinion. When persons of not very strong minds find that extreme opinions on one side are erroneous, they commonly run into those of an opposite description. When they have

made the discovery that Calvinism is unsafe ground to stand upon, they conclude that Romanism is the only thing which can afford them the sure footing they require. The Puritans believed that the contradictory of Popery was purity of faith. This, of course, was a great error, and has been repudiated, but error is multiform, and the danger now is lest persons, who have originally been leavened with Puritanical tenets, should, on finding their error, rush to the other extreme, and take it for granted that what is nearest to Popery is nearest to truth. My fears, however, as I have already observed, are not with respect to the Clergy, but to the rising generation. The religious movement of the last ten years has been gradual : those, who have most contributed to it, seem rather to have been led on from one opinion to another, than to have seen from the first whither they would advance, or to have started with any definite system : we therefore, my Reverend Brethren, have had more opportunity to view things calmly and dispassionately. But with respect to young persons this can hardly be said to be the case. With all the impetuosity and self-confidence of youth about them,—reckless of consequences, and full of exaggerated notions of the rights of

private judgment, they find themselves in the midst of a controversy, which has brought many older persons, persons of the highest talents and deepest religious feelings, into a miserable state of doubt and disquietude. They see on all sides a spirit at work, which nothing human can quell ;—there is a desire for unity and Catholic privileges which interests them, and they observe the persecuting, unchristian spirit, in which many act and write who oppose themselves to the present movement. With the generosity which is natural to their time of life, they are disposed to take part with those whom they think hardly treated ; and then, perhaps, in place of giving themselves up to the Church system, and so becoming practically better than they were before,—humble, diffident, self-disciplined, thankful for the blessings they possess,—they become mere talkers, perhaps even irreverent declaimers on subjects which are too hard for them, or which, at any rate, they are too ignorant, if not too shallow, to view in all their bearings. Meanwhile Rome has her eye upon them ; and, adapting herself to their tone of mind, represents her Creed not as it is, but as they wish it to be. She keeps what is essentially Popish as much as possible in

the back-ground,—brings what is Catholic prominently forward, and so in the end wins them over to her side, because they are too impatient to learn, that the middle way of truth, the way of the English Church, is as far removed from Popery on the one side as from Puritanism on the other.

I must therefore exhort you, my Reverend Brethren, that, as on all other accounts, so especially on this, you extend at the present time a double measure of care and watchfulness towards the younger members of your flock. If, with me, you believe that there is an almost incalculable amount of error and superstition in the Church of Rome ;—if, with me, you believe that she has not altered one jot or tittle of her ancient character ;—if, with me, you believe her to be still as subtle, as dangerous, and as false as she has ever been, as shameless a perverter of the truth, and as cruel a persecutor ;—if, with me, you feel that any attempt at union with her, while she is what she is, is to be deprecated utterly, and that all concession must come from her, not from us ;—if, with me, you have (because you know her real character) a deep and increasing dread of her workings and artifices ;—if, with me, you look on her as schisma-

tical, and anti-Christian ;—if, with me, you feel that our own Church is pure in doctrine, apostolic in her ministry, and that, if a man will live as her Prayer-Book would have him live, he will not miss of his salvation; you will be more than ever zealous to keep those who have been baptized among us within our pale, and you will leave nothing undone, which the sense of your tremendous responsibilities,—which your feelings of devotedness and affection can suggest, towards preserving those of your flocks who are most exposed to them, from the perils of these dangerous days.

With this view you will take care, that, so far as in you lies, none shall have it in their power to say, that they sought Rome because their own mother withheld from them the spiritual sustenance which they needed, or because they were discouraged from living (instead of being encouraged to live) according to the system prescribed in the Prayer Book. Let the slovenly method, in which the divine offices have, perhaps, in some places been performed heretofore, cease at once and for ever in all; let our Churches be no longer left to damp and dilapidation, but meet (as far as we can make them so) for the presence of Him who hath promised to come among us there

and bless us. Above all, let the ministration of the blessed Sacraments be duly and reverently performed; the one no longer solemnized out of its proper place in the service, the other more frequently administered. I well know that we have been so neglectful, that our people have ceased to value much which we could restore to them, and it will only be when we have taught them to look on attendance upon the ordinances of religion as a blessing and a privilege as well as a duty, that we can bring them back to the habits and feelings of a better day. And this can only be done gradually, most gradually, and in the exercise of that sound discretion, which prefers slow but sure advance, to that more rapid and excited movement which is sure ere long to halt and linger, and is not rarely forced to retrace its steps. Two services on the Sunday, where hitherto there has been but one, the observances of the Festivals, of Lent and Passion Week, and, as opportunity may offer, of the Ember and Rogation days, may in due time bring us back to the restoration of the daily service. The Church fasts kept will accustom men to habits of self-denial, and we may have more hope, that luxury will diminish, and almsgiving increase; the Offertory will not be as now, almost a mockery

of offerings, not as now, rarely read, but regularly, and largely contributed to. In a word, let the teaching of the Church and her holy practices as a Church be systematically brought forward, taking care, of course, all the while that an exaggerated and undue importance is not given to externals,—that, to use the language of a popular cry, “the Church be not set in place of the Saviour;” let there be, in short, a nearer approximation, year by year, to the system prescribed by our Prayer-Book, and I do not fear but that the result will be a vast increase of piety, devotion, and charity among us, and those Catholic aspirations and longings, which we hear of as now seeking relief irregularly and inadequately, and as looking towards other communions, will find safe and sufficient vent in our own. Be sure there is at this time an expansive principle within us, which can no longer be pent up with safety. If you attempt to repress it, an explosion, the limits of whose destructive force none can tell, will inevitably follow. But we have a safety-valve ready provided in the Church system, which, if only properly used, may yet bear us harmless. As for those, the success of whose system would be to drive their brethren into seces-

sion, it seems to me that they little know of what spirit they are. The opinions they dislike may or may not be true—that is a point on which men may differ to the end of time—but it cannot be well to condemn rashly and rancorously what has been held in whole or in part by such men as Bull, and Beveridge, and Andrewes, and Hooker, and Taylor, and Jackson, and a host besides of those who, in their day, were, and are still, the soundest Divines of the Church of England. It cannot be wise to seek to expel from the bosom of that Church men who love her with no common love, and seek to serve her with no ordinary devotion.

And while I thus warn you of the manner in which, without doing any thing hastily, unadvisedly, or without due intimation of your intentions to myself, you may, each in his own sphere, render our Church system more accordant in her practice with what she is in theory, I trust it is unnecessary to remind you, how needful it has become that your studies should be directed to the subjects which now agitate the public mind, and I am confident that, whatever views you espouse, you will not condemn without reading, and honestly making yourselves acquainted with, the real opinions of

those from whom you differ. Still less, I trust, is it needful, that I should recommend you especially to arm yourselves with sound weapons of defence against the assaults of Rome. If ever there was a case, in which weak arguments, illogical conclusions, incorrect statements, and a little knowledge were dangerous, it is in that contest. Our opponents are no unskilled controversialists, and they desire nothing better than an antagonist, whose notions of Popery are gathered from the declamations of popular orators at the public meetings of the day.

Nor, while I speak of your studies, must I omit one caution with respect to yourselves, namely, that, if the Church is ever to be, what all confess she might be among us, and all declare they wish her to be, her priesthood must be holy,—examples in prayer, in holiness, in devotedness, in self-denial, in taking up the Cross of Christ crucified;—they must live as men who, in the words of St. Paul, “though troubled on every side,” are yet “not distressed; though perplexed, yet not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in their body^d. ”

^d 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9, 10.

In conclusion. I have little hope that what I have now said will escape misrepresentations ; and to this, so far as the world is concerned. I am quite prepared to submit. But you, my Reverend Brethren, who can appreciate and sympathize in the difficulties which it has pleased God to lay on those who hold high office in the Church, will know that what has been spoken has not been uttered with the view of either supporting or depressing any man or set of men. But the same vows, which bind me "with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous doctrines, and to encourage others to do the same," bind me likewise "to maintain and set forward quietness, peace, and love among all men," and to restrain "the unquiet and disobedient."

And, seeing the grievous want of charity which has prevailed among us, I have felt it my duty to condemn those who have set themselves forward as gratuitous agitators, and unbidden accusers of their brethren. I am no lover of error, and will shew it no favour ; but, while the world stands, there must be points on which good men will differ, and so long as those points of difference do not contravene the Prayer-Book and formularies of the Church, it seems to me, that one set of opinions has the same right to expect toleration as the other.

Believe me, what most we need is peace : peace, in order that the Church may “lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes,” and provide spiritual sustenance for her population rapidly heathenizing through want of religious instruction ; peace, in order that her parochial system may be once more made adequate to the wants of her people ; peace, in order that she may calmly prepare, not merely for any crisis of opinions among her own children, but for that tremendous, final contest between good and evil, to which all things seem hastening with rapidity. Let us, then, avoiding the strifes of men, and keeping ourselves pure, seek the Church’s peace, and ensue it : and let our daily prayer be that of one who died a martyr in her cause, and whose blood was not shed in vain ; that God would “fill her with all truth, in all truth, with all peace ;” that where she is “corrupt,” her Heavenly Father would vouchsafe to “purify her,” “where in error, to direct her ; where superstitious, to rectify her ; where any thing is amiss in her, to reform it ; where it is right, to strengthen and confirm her ; where she is in want of any thing, to furnish it ; where she is divided and rent asunder, to make up the breaches of it^e. ”

^e Archbishop Laud’s Private Devotions, Dominica V. post Epiphaniam.

And then, my Brethren, be the end what it may, we shall not be unprepared to meet it:—we shall, perhaps, even be made worthy to suffer for His sake, who is the Church's Head and Lord ;—and, when the doubts and strifes of this present world are ended, shall through His alone merits be admitted to those mansions which have been prepared from the foundation of the world for the peace-makers,—the poor in spirit,—the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart.







